

Healthcare providers cannot rely on clearinghouses for ICD-10 implementation

Clearinghouses can be a major help for healthcare providers that need help submitting medical claims to healthcare payers. And they may have a role in the ICD-10 transition.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), "It is important to know that while clearinghouses can help, they cannot provide the same level of support for the ICD-10 transition as they did for the Version 5010 upgrade." Clearinghouses allowed healthcare providers to submit medical claims in the HIPAA 4010 standard and sent the claims in the HIPAA 5010 standard to healthcare payers. Apparently there are **healthcare providers still using the HIPAA 4010 standard** — which cannot hold ICD-10 codes.

ICD-10 codes describe a medical diagnosis or procedure and must be selected by the provider not a clearinghouse. But CMS says the clearinghouses can help with the ICD-10 transition by:

- "Identifying problems that lead to claims being rejected"
- "Providing guidance about how to fix a rejected claim (e.g., the provider needs to include more or different data)"

But clearinghouses cannot help identify which ICD-10 codes to use unless they offer coding services and have access to clinical documentation.

When preparing for ICD-10 implementation, CMS suggests reviewing agreements and contacting clearinghouses in regard to ICD-10 readiness. CMS suggests asking these questions:

- "Are you prepared to meet the ICD-10 deadline of October 1, 2014? Where is your organization in the transition process?"
- "Who will be my primary contact at your organization for the ICD-10 transition?"
- "Can we set up regular check-in meetings to keep progress on track?"
- "What are your plans for testing claims containing ICD-10 codes? How will you involve your clients, such as my practice, in that process?"
- "Can my practice send test claims with ICD-10 codes to see if they are accepted? If so, when will you begin accepting test claims?"
- "Can you provide guidance or training on how my clinical documentation will have to change to support ICD-10 coding?"
- "Do you anticipate any pricing changes for your services due to the switch to ICD-10?"

Remember, clearinghouses can help process medical claims. They cannot convert your ICD-9 coded medical claims into ICD-10 coded claims.